

XXXIV.—Note on the Type of *Malaconotus leucotis*, Swainson. By OSBERT SALVIN, M.A., F.R.S., &c.

(Plate XI.)

A FEW weeks ago Mr. R. B. Sharpe wrote to me asking if the type of *Malaconotus leucotis* of Swainson was still extant in the Cambridge Museum, and requesting me, if so, to examine the specimen with a view to ascertaining the validity of the species. Not finding any bird so named along with the other specimens of Swainsonian *Malaconoti*, I carefully read the description (An. in Menag. p. 341. no. 180); and it at once occurred to me that the bird was no *Malaconotus* at all, but a member of the American genus *Vireolanius*. With this clue I turned to *Vireolanius*, and there found a Swainsonian specimen answering to the description so accurately that, in spite of the loss of the original label, I had no doubt whatever that the type of *M. leucotis* was before me.

Looking further into the matter, it became evident that *M. leucotis* was identical with the bird long afterwards described by Bonaparte as *Vireolanius icterophrys*; and thus a change in the recognized synonymy of this species becomes necessary.

In the 'Nomenclator Avium Neotropicalium' (p. 16) Mr. Scater and I enumerated the five species of *Vireolanius* with which we were acquainted, being those recognized by Prof. Baird in his 'Review of American Birds.' Putting aside *V. melitophrys*, which is very distinct from all the rest in coloration, we have four species of *Vireolanius*, the prevailing colour of which is green. Of these the two more northern species, *V. pulchellus* and *V. eximius*, have the sides of the head green, and a blue tinge on the feathers of the top of the head. The latter is readily distinguishable from the former by its yellow superciliary stripe. The two more southern species, *V. leucotis* and *V. chlorogaster*, have the sides and top of the head grey. Besides a common yellow superciliary line, *V. leucotis* has a white streak on either cheek, which, running from under the eye, includes the lower portion of the ear-coverts. The lower surface of the body in *V. leucotis* is of a much clearer yellow than in *V. chlorogaster*.

About the time that my attention was first called to this subject, Mr. Buckley sent us two beautiful skins of *V. leucotis* from Sarayacu, in Ecuador. From one of these the accompanying plate has been prepared, as the Swainsonian specimen is in hardly a fit state for being figured, the plumage being abraded, as well as faded from exposure. Moreover the origin of Swainson's specimen is quite unknown, the species having been doubtfully set down by Swainson as an inhabitant of Africa, probably from a general resemblance in colour the bird bears to some members of the truly African genus *Laniarius*.

The geographical ranges attributed to *V. leucotis* and *V. chlorogaster* are hardly satisfactory. Bonaparte stated that the former was from the Rio Negro; to the latter he gave the vague habitat South America*.

"The head of the Huallaga, East Peru, and Cayenne," are the habitats Prof. Baird gives to *V. leucotis*; and of this species, as already stated, we have recently received specimens from Sarayacu, in Ecuador. Eastern Peru is set down in Mr. Sclater's 'Catalogue of American Birds' as the origin of his specimen of *V. chlorogaster*; and this statement is followed by Prof. Baird in his 'Review,' on the evidence of the same skin. The skin in question (which is marked "S. America," *Verreaux*) has all the appearance of a Cayenne skin, the legs being tied together and the specimen shaped in the form well known as peculiar to the preparations from that country. If this surmise be correct, as I believe it to be, and if the Cayenne origin of one of the specimens of *V. leucotis* examined by Prof. Baird be, as seems very probable, incorrect, we have the distribution of these two species as follows:—

V. chlorogaster. Peculiar to Cayenne.

V. leucotis. Ranging from the Rio Negro to Ecuador and the upper waters of the Huallaga.

This account of the ranges of these nearly allied species seems to be more probably correct than that which has been hitherto advanced.

* In the register of the British Museum, where this type exists, it is recorded as having come from Cayenne.

In the 'Hand-list of Birds' (i. p. 382), G. R. Gray quotes under *V. chlorogaster* a synonym *V. dubusi*, Verr. I have been unable to find any published description of the bird under this name. I find, however, with Mr. Sharpe's assistance, that, besides the type of *V. chlorogaster*, there is a second specimen in the British Museum, which was acquired (apparently from Verreaux, through Cuming) in 1858, and which is called in the register *V. dubusi*. With it the Museum obtained, amongst other birds, *Monarcha castaneiventris*, described by Verreaux in the 'Revue de Zoologie' in 1858 (p. 304). As no description of *V. dubusi* appears in the same paper, it seems more than probable that it never was so described at all. This name, in fact, is doubtless one of the many which Gray copied from the bottom of a stand, or from a label, and incorporated into his 'Hand-list' to perplex us all in our searches for their origin. Of the same nature, perhaps, is a synonym of *V. icterophrys*, quoted in the 'Hand-list' a few lines lower down, and fathered upon Mr. Sclater and myself, except that in this case an evident *lapsus calami* was most probably perpetrated by Gray's own pen!

Lastly, it remains to give the altered synonymy of *V. leucotis*, which runs thus:—

VIREOLANIUS LEUCOTIS. (Plate XI.)

Malaconotus leucotis, Sw. An. in Menag. p. 341 (1838).

Vireolanius icterophrys, Bp. Compt. Rend. xxxviii. p. 380, et Not. Orn. p. 60 (1854); Baird, Rev. Am. B. p. 399; Scl. & Salv. Ex. Orn. p. 16; Nomencl. p. 16.

Mus. Acad. Cantabr. et S. & G.

+ XXXV.—*Descriptions of two new Species of Birds from Central America, and one from South America.* By OSBERT SALVIN, M.A., F.R.S., &c.

WHEN Mr. Sclater and I, in 1868, last revised the genus *Pyrgisoma* (Ex. Orn. p. 128), we considered that Guatemalan and Costa-Rican specimens, there called *P. leucote* (Cab.),



JGKeulemans lith

Hanhart imp

VIREOLANIUS LEUCOTIS.